

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention discloses methods and apparatus for automatically loading drivers on computers for devices coupled to a communication medium such as an IEEE 1394 serial bus. Operating systems running on the computers detect when a device is connected to the communication medium. The operating systems then determine whether one of the drivers stored in memory on the device will enable the computers to utilize the device. Alternatively, the memory could store—in addition to drivers or in lieu of drivers—a uniform resource locator (URL) or other pointer to a location that contains the drivers (and/or other installation/configuration files) for various operating systems and devices. The operating systems will then load the appropriate drivers for their respective computers and allow access to the device. If none of the drivers on the memory are suitable for a particular computer, then its operating system will prompt a user to manually insert a computer-readable medium containing the appropriate drivers. Thus, the present invention provides methods and apparatus for automatically loading device drivers.

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